

REMARKS

Claims 2-17, 19-20, 22-26, and 28-29 are currently pending in the subject application and are presently under consideration. Favorable reconsideration of the subject patent application is respectfully requested in view of the comments herein.

I. Rejection of Claims 2-17, 19, 22-26 and 28-29 Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 2-17, 19, 22-26 and 28-29 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Ohmura *et al.* (US 6,151,583) in view of Chatterjee *et al.* (US 5,774,661), and further in view of Yaung (US 6,405,215). Withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested for at least the following reasons. Ohmura *et al.*, Chatterjee *et al.* and Yaung, either alone or in combination, fail to teach or suggest each and every limitation set forth in the subject claims.

To reject claims in an application under §103, an examiner must establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness. A *prima facie* case of obviousness is established by a showing of three basic criteria. First, there must be some suggestion or motivation, either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art, to modify the reference or to combine reference teachings. Second there must be a reasonable expectation of success. Finally, the prior art reference (or references when combined) ***must teach or suggest all the claim limitations***. See MPEP §706.02(j). The ***teaching or suggestion to make the claimed combination*** and the reasonable expectation of success ***must be found in the prior art and not based on the Applicant's disclosure***. See *In re Vaeck*, 947 F.2d 488, 20 USPQ2d 1438 (Fed. Cir. 1991) (emphasis added).

The subject claims relate to a computing workflow system having process definition represented in a workflow table. In particular, independent claim 2 (and similarly independent claims 4, 11, 17, 23 and 29) recites ***scanning all databases on the server for timeout workflow events and executing the timeout workflow events as due using a timeout agent***. Neither Ohmura *et al.* nor Chatterjee *et al.* teach or suggest this novel aspect of the invention as claimed.

The Examiner acknowledges that Ohmura *et al.* and Chatterjee *et al.* fail to teach or suggest the aforementioned novel aspect as recited in the subject independent claims,

and thus provides Yaung to cure the deficiencies rendered by Ohmura *et al.* and Chatterjee *et al.* (See Final Office Action dated February 1, 2007, pg. 3). Yaung relates to tracking and handling of workflow items in a multimedia database system. In particular, Yaung discloses a workflow agent that monitor an item of interest, such as a document stored in a multimedia database, on a real-time basis. (See Yaung, Col. 3, ll. 18-29). However, Yaung fails to teach or disclose ***scanning all databases on the server for timeout workflow events and executing the timeout workflow events as due using a timeout agent.***

The Examiner contends that the workflow agent disclosed in Yaung can scan a database. (See Final Office Action dated February 1, 2007, pg. 3). Applicants' representative respectfully disagrees with such contention. The workflow agent disclosed in Yaung does not ***scan all databases on the server for timeout workflow events*** as recited in the subject claims. On the contrary, Yaung's workflow agent only monitors an item of interest on a real-time basis. (See Yaung, col. 3, ll. 23-25). For example, Yaung notes that a workflow application can invoke the workflow agent to monitor a document in a multimedia database. (See Yaung, col. 4, ll. 1-3). Thus, Yaung's workflow agent does not scan the multimedia database for the document but only monitors the specified document. On the other hand, the subject independent claims recite a timeout agent that can be implemented as a SQL job to scan all databases on the server for timeout workflow events and execute the timeout workflow events as due. (See Specification pg. 10, ll.27 – pg. 11, ll. 2). Yaung fails to teach or suggest such claim aspects.

In view of at least the foregoing, it is readily apparent that Ohmura *et al.*, Chatterjee *et al.* and Yaung, individually or in combination, fail to teach or suggest the subject claims as recited in independent claim 2 (and similarly in independent claims 4, 11, 17, 23 and 29). Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection with respect to independent claims 2, 4, 11, 17, 23 and 29 (and associated dependent claims) is respectfully requested.

II. Rejection of Claim 20 Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claim 20 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Ohmura *et al.* in view of Chatterjee *et al.*, in view of Yaung, and further in view of Haverstock *et al.* (US 2002/0038357). This rejection should be withdrawn for at least the

following reasons. Claim 20 depends from independent claim 17; and Haverstock *et al.* does not overcome the aforementioned deficiencies of Ohmura *et al.*, Chatterjee *et al.* and Yaung with respect to independent claim 17. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

The present application is believed to be in condition for allowance in view of the above comments and amendments. A prompt action to such end is earnestly solicited.

In the event any fees are due in connection with this document, the Commissioner is authorized to charge those fees to Deposit Account No. 50-1063 [MSFTP238US].

Should the Examiner believe a telephone interview would be helpful to expedite favorable prosecution, the Examiner is invited to contact applicants' undersigned representative at the telephone number below.

Respectfully submitted,

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